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The Masonic Craftsman

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In This Issue: Large or Small Lodges — Which?

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SIR ALFRED ROBBINS
1856-1931

NEW ENGLAND MASONIC CRAFTSMAN

PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
ALFRED HAMPDEN MOORHOUSE, *Editor*
MEMBER MASONIC PRESS ASSOCIATION

VOL. 26 MARCH, 1931 No. 7

IS LEADERSHIP LACKING? Looking over the field of industry, politics and finance in this year of grace, it is difficult to see outstanding above the common level, the heads of any really great leaders.

It is true there are men who seem to dominate their own particular fields, but analysis of the causes for their success would probably disclose that these men are largely opportunists, with a little more vision than the average, who have taken advantage of rapidly changing methods during recent years to their own profit. It would be difficult to style such men as leaders, at least in the sense that they have performed any signal act which might be construed as inspiring to any great element of the population.

Yet this judgment may be too severe. It is generally recognized by discerning observers that the so-called machine-age has had a pronounced tendency to destroy initiative and make of the individual something of an automaton. True, there are still individualists among us, but those whose names appear most frequently in print are generally classed among the unsound in the field of logical thought.

It would be a pity, indeed, if the development of machines and the adoption of machine methods universally will tend to bring all men into a condition of uniformity. Such a condition conceivably could, without the inspiration of at least some occasional genius, inevitably reduce the common lot in time to one of mediocrity.

One cannot help, from a reading of the day's events, get other than a view of things indicative of a somewhat hopeless floundering on the part of elective and appointive representatives in nation, state and city affairs. In short, the world lacks leaders.

In the field of Freemasonry there seems, too, to be few if any outstanding leaders or authorities with sufficient inspiration, strength of character, or ability to guide the Craft into a position where it might take advantage of its opportunities to the full.

Most of the men entrusted with high office soon find themselves lost in the absorption of materialistic matters, to the disadvantage of the Craft generally, and while there are many conscientious and earnest workers in its ranks, the times apparently have not developed men who can by their genius and zeal take Freemasonry up into a level above that of placid self satisfaction and contentment with the past in which for the moment, at least, it seems content to remain.

Brother George W. Chester, known to thousands who have occasion to visit the Masonic Temple, Boston, where he is custodian, is recovering from a serious illness. His many friends will be glad to welcome him back.

MASONRY'S GRAND OLD MAN With deep regret we announce the death on March 10, of Sir Alfred Robbins at his home in Barons Court, London, England, at the age of seventy-four.

Sir Alfred, who served for thirty-six years as London correspondent of the *Birmingham Post*, in 1924 visited the United States to bring official greetings to Masonic organizations in this country. At that time he came to Boston as guest of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge, the oldest in the United States, and was then made an honorary member of the Fourth Estate Lodge. He had a host of friends and admirers among the Craft here. Since 1913 he had been president of the board of general purposes of the Grand Lodge of England, a position which has been described as the premiership of Freemasonry.

The Duke of Connaught, grand master of the Grand Lodge of England, in investing Sir Alfred with his position in 1913, also conferred upon him the title of past grand warden, highest honorary rank in the United Grand Lodge of England. Besides touring the United States in behalf of Masonry, he had also, in 1927, made a similar trip to Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil. He had a prominent part in Masonic charitable activities, and in 1929 was president of the Old Masonians Dramatic Society. He also had the unique distinction of having a lodge named for him during his lifetime.

His interests were not confined to Freemasonry. He headed, in 1908, the London District Institute of Journalists, and was a member of the Society of Dramatic Critics and the Committee of Critics Circle. The Dickens Fellowship made him its president in 1929. King George knighted him in 1917 in recognition of his work as a dramatic critic, political writer and general newspaper man. He had written half a dozen plays, as well as books and articles on political historical, Masonic and social subjects.

Thus passes to the Celestial Lodge above the dean of Masonry in the English speaking world. With marked ability and an abundance of those excellent attributes pertaining to a true Craftsman, Sir Alfred Robbins, by his personal charm, unflinching tact, and qualities of heart and mind, endeared himself not only to those whose privilege it was daily to come in contact with him, but through his deeds and words to become universally known and loved by millions.

His spirit has passed from earthly sphere. His memory will live forever. For men die, but their works, if founded on truth, shall live forever.

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Large or Small Lodges? A Monthly Symposium

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CLOSER HARMONY IN SMALLER LODGE

By ALFRED H. MOORHOUSE
Editor *Masonic Craftsman*, Boston

THIS is a moot question, and as such susceptible of innumerable interpretations, depending entirely upon the point of view of the individual, which in turn is influenced to a large extent by his Masonic environment, and experience.



Cases can be made out for both the large and the small lodge. In the city, where large lodges predominate, of a membership of several hundred, sometimes running up to over a thousand, it will be found that the average attendance comprises less than ten per cent of the membership. These men, supposedly held together in a mutuality of interests by the mystic tie of the Craft, cannot, because of the multiplicity of other activities and interests, maintain the same degree of interest that the smaller lodge with a very much larger percentage attracts. There are far more lukewarm members among the big lodges than among the small.

On the other hand, when a lodge of less than a hundred meets, it does so with a more complete and unified harmony of motive than is possible for the larger organization. In the small towns and villages throughout the country, particularly, men travel regularly many miles, often under extremely difficult conditions, to attend lodge. Their interest in all that concerns it is keen and sincere. These men are, in the writer's opinion, the backbone of the fraternity.

In England, where Freemasonry as we know it originated, small lodges are the rule. There, while the amount of Masonic charity is not broadcast, the percentage of members contributing both in number and relative amount to the objects of the craft is much greater than in America. A lesson may well be taken from the records of our English brethren who, with a fine disregard for pretentious temples, ostentatious display or personal public adornment, typify much that is very fine.

If intimate interest is to be maintained in the purpose of the Craft; if the service expected of members is to be something more than lip service, then the small lodge is decidedly the medium for its attainment.

The apron Mason, the chronic "joiner" of the craft, is essentially the city man—member of "the biggest lodge in the state." His contribution to Freemasonry is very small and negative in character. The small lodge member on the other hand more often is one to whom Freemasonry is a living, vital thing. His mem-

bership means much to him. He has absorbed to a greater degree the significance of the institution, and in his ideals and personality measures up more truly to the standard of a MASTER Mason.

LARGE LODGE OFFERS GREATER OPPORTUNITIES

By WM. C. RAPP
Editor *Masonic Chronicler*, Chicago

THE superiority of a lodge is determined by the quality of its members, their ability and willingness to give of their time and energy, and the extent to which they are imbued with the spirit and principles of the fraternity. The numerical strength of a lodge is an important factor, but is not in itself conclusive evidence of worth or efficiency.



There are small lodges, heroically striving to take advantage of every opportunity offered, which are achieving varying degrees of success; there are others in which a handful of members are hopelessly struggling merely to preserve their existence. There are large lodges which are splendidly fulfilling their destiny as Masonic bodies; there are others which, although apparently functioning acceptably, have deteriorated into organic mechanisms in which the principles of Masonry are at low ebb or entirely lost sight of.

The chief claims set forth in behalf of lodges of limited membership are that their members enjoy better acquaintance with each other, that more intimate social relationship exists, and that a closer bond of brotherhood prevails than is possible in a large lodge. If this were true it would be important. It may be admitted that in a lodge of five hundred or a thousand members it is manifestly impossible to maintain close personal relationship between all members and their respective families. Nevertheless, a member of a large lodge may enjoy such intimate intercourse with a larger number of his brethren, if he finds them congenial, than will be found on the entire roll of membership of a lodge of forty or fifty members. He simply has a larger field from which to select those with whom he desires intimacy and companionship.

It is asserted that at the meetings of a small lodge the same members are always present, and that at the meetings of large lodges the attendance is constantly changing. This is not borne out by facts. Every lodge, be it large or small, has its band of faithful regular attendants. The only difference is that at the meetings of a large lodge there are more of them.

It is indisputable that a large lodge offers greater opportunities in all matters having to do with the Craft, even though no individual can take advantage of all of the opportunities. It would be ridiculous to maintain that a radio receiving set capable of picking up messages from a great number of stations is inferior to one of more restricted power; that a frugal meal with but little choice of viands has an advantage over a banquet where there is an elaborate menu to choose from, or that a small and incomplete library is preferable to a large one.

The small lodge is naturally restricted by its more limited resources, in the things it may do for its members. It is unable to provide and maintain proper temples in which to conduct its meetings. It cannot offer its members and their families the social and entertainment features it would like to. It cannot care for the material wants of its unfortunate members as well as a large lodge, nor does it, as a rule, evince greater inclination than the large lodge to dispense assistance to those in distress. It may be maintained that these are material matters, and have nothing to do with the fellowship of Masonry, but they are integral parts of the institution, as it exists to-day, and cannot be ignored. Inability to do things is as barren of results as disinclination to do them.

There is nothing that a small lodge can do which a large lodge cannot do better. Is it not significant that lodges do grow large? What attracts members to them if they fail in all those things for which they exist?

SMALLER LODGES PREFERABLE

By J. A. FETTERLY

Editor *Masonic Tidings*, Milwaukee

THERE are many excellent arguments both for and against large lodges or lodges having large memberships.

Those favorable to large lodges have largely to do with the financial or material side of Masonry; those against, apply more readily to the esthetic or spiritual phases.

A lodge with a large membership — 500 and up — can confidently expect to own its own temple some day, to have a healthy treasury and to do things that small lodges cannot hope to accomplish. Large lodges can promote entertainments, can hire

speakers of renown, and, by having a large choice, can often have more efficient officers.

The small lodge, by very reason of its restricted membership, is certain to have a more fraternal atmosphere, a warmer feeling of friendliness and a higher percentage of spiritual content than its larger brother. At best, one can intimately know but a limited number of people. The large lodge is consequently made up of several groups or cliques. If one's own "crowd" happens not to be present some night, it's just too bad!

In England the average lodge membership is under 100 members. This is true in London and the other

large cities, as well as in the provinces. Those who have had opportunity to know by contact, say there is no attendance problem there. In fact, tales are told of an English Mason traveling clear across the country just to attend lodge.

Of course, there, the members are usually all of one class or business, thus giving a kindred social or business tone to the lodge in addition to the fraternal appeal.

The officers, too, can keep in more intimate touch with 100 members than is possible with 500 or 5,000.

Real Masonry—fellowship, friendliness, brotherhood—is usually more in evidence in the smaller lodge.

LARGER ENTITY MOST EFFICIENT

By JOS. E. MORCOMBE

Editor *Masonic World*, San Francisco

THE subject for present discussion is sufficiently indicated by the caption. The question is asked by Brother Rapp whether the large or the small lodge can best serve the purposes for which each is established and maintained; which will give greatest returns and those most valuable to the individual member? Arguments could be multiplied on both sides, but our space limitation confines us to barest outline; to a consideration of such phases of the subject as may provide best food for thought.



We come at once to the stock argument used in favor of the small lodge. It is claimed that the

body of limited membership is more homogenous in texture, more likely to be united in sentiment and activity, and far and away beyond the larger organization in all that goes to the fraternal life.

It is doubtless true that in the simpler and more contented past Masonic bodies of a size allowing close acquaintance and a real intimacy of the membership were most likely to exemplify the quiet virtues distinguishing the true Masonic character. But we are apt to idealize the past, and to take it for granted that the fathers were better men than ourselves. The little lodges of a generation ago, in more or less crude and isolated communities, were very real assets. They provided social and moral centers, and were recognized as beneficial influences. The bond of union among Masons was strong beyond any other. This much may be admitted, but it is also true that such lodges were too often stodgy, smug, and ruled by the Mrs. Grundy of that period. Their members were, on the whole, men of narrow vision, and their activities were closely hedged in by a limited culture and scant experience.

The present-day advocate of the small lodge assumes that he is on the side of quality, as opposed to those who strive for quantity. But he makes the fatal mistake of assuming further that the material of the smaller body is more carefully selected and therefore of superior quality. Contrariwise he will have it that the larger lodge will, being obsessed with the idea of bigness, tend to admission of any or all who may apply.

and is certain to fall away from the accepted standards of the craft.

But may it not happen; indeed is it not certain to happen, that the larger lodge will, because of the superior organization essential to good management, be more apt to scrupulously examine into the quality of applicants? There will not be for such body the sordid necessity that presses upon the average small lodge, financially harassed or even embarrassed, to accept material of doubtful quality. The large lodge, having ample revenues, can afford to insist upon the best in available manhood, and to reject whatever of

material does not come to its high standard.

Bigness carried to an extreme may be a besetting sin of our American life, as is often alleged. But common sense is on the side of those who hold that the larger entity, properly organized and managed, is most economical and efficient. This, as experience proves, is true for the properly conducted Masonic lodge. If management be lax, the larger aggregation will necessarily be a greater failure than that one of smaller proportions. We are assuming that the distinction will be held in mind between a disciplined and co-ordinated body and a mere mob.

The Great Lights

By GEORGE S. SLOAN

An Oration Delivered before the Grand Lodge of Idaho

is without meaning. The arrangement of the lodge, furniture, altar, stations, covering, lights, in fact everything about a lodge of Masons, has meaning.

Every part of every degree, the preparation of the candidate, the reception, every action, word and movement, has meaning. Some of the things meant are explained, some are not. Some things that we see and hear have lessons that are easily perceived; others have meanings not so easily seen.

As the years pass on we are increasingly impressed with what the things close at hand mean to us. In the commonplace we find those lessons that give life a deeper meaning. So in our search as Masons we may well go to all the lore of the ages. We may search through history, ponder the deep philosophies, strive to understand the mystic teachings that have been handed down from remote times. Thus may we increase our understanding of Masonry. We ought not, however, to neglect the things that are at all times close to us. Simple things that we see and often touch as we gather within our lodges.

Many times the question is asked: "What do you see in Masonry?" Not always is the question put in just those words, but very often with the same meaning. The question has come to me in just that form often. Some time ago it was put to me by one who occupied a rather high position in the affairs of the day in which we live. When I was back in my study I pondered over that question. I sought an answer for it. I felt that I should have an answer

that would satisfy my own mind. So I pondered over the subject. I started back at the time when first I sought admission into a lodge of Masons. Step by step I passed along until in my mental review I came to the place where light was given to me—the first thing I ever saw in Masonry—the Great Lights. That presentation made a deep and lasting impression upon me. First of all because of the manner in which the presentation was made. And also because of the things thus presented. They were commonplace things—things I had known all my life. I recall that afterwards I wondered why those things were used, why they were given such distinction, why they were so placed together. Then more of the mystic light was given me, and after a while I took the Great Lights as a matter of course. I wandered away into far fields of research.

Twenty years have passed. During that time I have not been inactive in Masonry. I have had the high honor of being in the East; I have worked in study clubs; I have read books, pamphlets and magazines. In the rich fellowship and surrounded by those whose minds are stored with many facts, and blessed with much understanding, I have journeyed on. Something of Masonry has entered deep into my mind and laid hold upon my heart. Masonry means much to me, both because of the light of understanding it gives, and because of the feelings, deep and abiding, it inspires.

There is so much opportunity to study about our Craft. So many books, so many magazines, so much

material afforded us, that if one should give all his time to that study he could not cover all of the material. Take the printed proceedings of the grand lodge. Here is a wealth of material, so full of merit. We wonder sometime why masters of lodges do not more often use the printed proceedings of the grand lodge for the edification of the brethren in their lodges. And yet we think we know why not. Such materials, like the speeches we hear, the books that we read, and such things, taken apart from the surroundings and circumstances that called them forth, when presented to hearts and minds unprepared by the rich fellowship wherein they were born, lose much of their power to move both the mind and the heart.

When a master presents the proceedings of the grand lodge to his lodge he is much like one who has made the journey up to the top of some great mountain, in company with choice companions. As he journeys along his heart is warmed within him. His spirit is exalted. And when at last he stands, with the kingdoms of the world spread out before his vision, new values enter his soul. Back in the valley again he holds a pebble in his hand. This pebble he has brought back from the mountain top. He holds it out to the view of those who remained in the valley. He says that mountain is like this pebble. As he goes on to tell the vision of the mountain top he discovers that his words do not convey that which he prizes so highly. He discovers the truth that each man must climb the mountain of

truth for himself. The exalted vision is given to those alone who climb.

What a mountain top experience we have here. In company with great souls we view the work. We listen to these men who have carried "the heat and burden of the day" for more than half a century. We feel the contact of spirit with spirit. We listen to words telling of high resolution as the records of the past, and the riches of the present possessions of Masonry are recalled. From this high vantage point we think of the world; we think we can see the destiny of this great state of ours, influenced by the high principles of our art operating through ten thousand Masons. We see even into the purple twilight along the horizon—to that land beyond—as we hear the names of our departed brethren.

And as we take back the pebble, if I may use the figure of speech, "The Grand Lodge printed Proceedings," we find that without the surroundings that we here obtain—the rich fellowship, the spirit uplifted—we cannot convey to the brethren that have not climbed to this mountain top much of the meaning that the sessions of Grand Lodge have had for us.

So with other Masonic material. Joseph Fort Newton wrote "The Builders." We have been told that this great Masonic book is in our library. We should read it—study it!

In the foreword to the book Newton tells us why he wrote such a book. No doubt every thoughtful Mason has had the same desire to obtain a clearer understanding of Masonry. The three divisions of the book, prophecy, history, interpretation, indicate the nature of the contents. No Mason can read "The Builders" without becoming a better man. It repays the effort of reading many-fold. And yet not this book, great and helpful as it is, nor any other book, is placed on the altar as one of the great lights.

Many apologists for the Bible have arisen. There have been many critics, and we still have them. Some have thrown the book aside because some things in it they cannot accept. It seems to me that such men are as foolish as a man would be who, find-

ing a piece of ore shot through with gold, would throw it away because it contained some dross, because he could not use all of it.

Masonry has honored no book as it has honored the Bible. Many we present it to to-day from a non-sectarian point of view? We well know that scores of denominations have been built up, all differing as to interpretation of the Book. May I present it as it appears to one who looks back to the home in which he grew up and where it was the Great Book, as one who feels that much of the richness of the lives that have blessed his life found their treasure in the promises and teaching of that great Book; as it appears to one who has gone to it in sorrow, taken its sayings to those in bereavement, used its teaching as advice, to warn, and to encourage; as it appears to one who has had the high privilege of being accepted into that fellowship where it is held to be one of "The Great Lights"? May we present it from a Masonic viewpoint, at least in so far as we are able to think Masonically?

One great church held that this Book was the great light. But that church refused to let the people read it. The great light was chained to a desk in a cell, and the whole world was in darkness—then the dark ages held sway over a troubled world of mankind. We may as effectually lock the pages of that book by fear of controversy, or by remaining ignorant of its contents.

The records of that Book begin with God. In that, is it not Masonic? Swiftly the records unfold. What a scene lies back of those first four chapters! Men of science have read the record of the rocks and given great meaning to those observations of minds "walking in the early morning of human life and understanding." Next comes man formed of the earth. A living soul! Then the blight. Then the record follows man on that slow toilsome journey up the mountain towards God. Wonder stories—stories of pestilence, famine, jealousy, hatred, murder and intrigue.

Down from the mountain, the record follows man across the long, long journey to another mountain. Here

in the records we find miracle stories, exalted poetry, sublime hymns (the Psalms), drama, romance.

No treatment of the great lights would be complete in any sense without the thought of immortality. As we read the Book we become increasingly aware of the fact that the end of the journey of life lies just at the beginning of the journey of eternity. Here and there the curtains are drawn back from the windows of this, our house of clay, and we are given a glimpse out along that highway that leads to the bright City of God.

This universe in which we live is so vast as to stagger the mind of man as he seeks to comprehend it. The light from yonder star that shines in the sky even now will not reach the boundaries of the universe, if the universe be bounded, for a hundred years. How like a flash of light in the darkness is the life of man! Out yonder are heavenly bodies so large that if our sun should be placed in the very center of one, our earth would describe its annual journey upon its equator. Heavenly bodies with diameters of one hundred eighty million miles? How small we are!

Far from being depressed by the vastness of the universe, the soul of man exults. The power back of all creation is his God. The Grand Master presides over His work. Words of the great light paint the picture, but faintly, of what man shall be when he walks out upon that great highway of the universe, free from his prison of clay, with the ears unstopped to listen to the music of the universe, the heavenly choirs, with eyes uncovered to behold Him in His beauty. Faith looks beyond the "Brow of the Hill", and the thought of life beyond, of glad reunion, of being set to work by the Supreme Grand Master upon the walls of the Heavenly Temple, lightens all the drab pathway of life with luminous glory.

So one great light takes man from the Garden to God. And the other two speak of righteousness and love. As we pause before the altar now and then, may something of these great lessons, and others which they may teach, enter into our minds and hearts.

Lodge Courtesy

There is an old saying that history repeats itself. In these days of much being said about lodge attendance, it is interesting to discover that the present generation is not much different from those of other days. We are constantly querying regarding the lack of attendance in many Masonic quarters. This complaint comes not alone from one branch of the institution, but from all branches of the fraternity, and is not confined alone to our fraternal institution. It is the universal topic of nearly every phase of activity in this day and generation. One person will attribute it to the radio, to the effect that those who once found other things for enjoyment have only to return home after the day's work is completed, and after supper, put on his smoking jacket and turn on the switch, where he is enabled without much effort to listen to every conceivable kind of entertainment without stepping from his own hearthstone or fireside. Another will tell you that the reason why he does not attend is because there are so many new faces with whom he does not feel acquainted and that those who held his friendship and associations of other days now fail to put in their appearance with any degree of regularity. Another says that there are not enough evenings in the week to give the necessary attention to all the things which he would like to do, and therefore some of the associations of former days must be cast aside. Still another group come to the conclusion that all organizations are apparently the same and they do not differentiate between a canoe club and a civic improvement association, a mock trial or a political gathering. To them, each one is an evening of temporary excitement and mode of contact. All of which may be necessary, but are not quite as essential as some of the worthwhile fraternities—in fact, this happily is not the case in every jurisdiction or location. Occasionally, we find a group of men who hold to the theory that for worthwhile appreciation and enjoyment there is no fraternal contact which can favorably compare with the association which comes from contact with men who have found the best side of Freemasonry, namely,

friendship and brotherly love. It has long been our contention that men of real earnestness become associated with and maintain their contacts with groups or organization which pay the best dividends, and by that we do not mean dividends in dollars and cents. How, then, can a Masonic lodge pay extra dividends to its members in these days of stress and unusual social activity? As we said in the early portion of this article, the general complaint of to-day is not very different from that of other days, and in our research we find repeatedly that the problems of to-day are but the problems of yesterday coming forth to new environments, perhaps by a new method.

Brother Bun F. Price, writing some time ago about Lodge Courtesy, spoke as follows: "There seems to be a general complaint on the part of city lodges of the small attendance at lodge meetings, and how to remedy it is the all-absorbing question. This state of things may be brought about in many ways, chief among which is a lack of lodge courtesy. How often have you attended lodge meetings and noticed members sit throughout the entire evening without being recognized, except, perhaps, by the secretary or some intimate friend? How often have you seen the worshipful master enter the lodge room, speak a moment with the secretary, and perhaps, the wardens, and then go direct to the East and proceed to open the lodge? How often have you seen brethren "clothe themselves", and sneak away to their seats, and there sit like a "knot on a log", oblivious to others who were passing, with their eyes fixed on a chair? How often have you seen brethren called on to assist in the work with formality that would do credit to a diplomat? How often have you noticed visitors and past masters stay through the entire proceeding without ever once being recognized officially? How often have you noticed, at the close of the lodge, how the brethren would make a rush for their hats, as though the house was on fire, and they were trying to get out?"

"Yes, of course, you have noticed all these things! And why is it thus? Simply because there is an icy at-

mosphere in the room, which has been allowed to escape from the refrigerator of non-sociability—a lack of lodge courtesy. The brethren have attended lodge as a matter of duty, and once in there, "Stuck it out," notwithstanding their teeth chattered, and their fraternal feeling froze hard and fast.

"Do you think these same brothers will subject themselves again to that kind of treatment? Not much. So you must reckon without this number in the future. And so it is continued, meeting after meeting, until so large a majority has been struck with the cold wave that a "corporal's guard" of members at a meeting is a rarity. Visitors may augment the number occasionally, but they, too, never come but once. There is no use in disguising the fact that a lack of courtesy and warm feeling, in a great measure, solves the problem of "thin meetings."

If this is the case, let's try another tack. Let's lay aside that coldness and apathy which is so detrimental to lodge attendance, and illustrate in our every-day walks and at lodge meetings that warmth of fellowship and brotherly love which should ever characterize the "Sons of Light." Never attend a lodge meeting without shaking hands with everyone present, if possible, and asking after their health and the health of their families. Should you find a brother in distress or bowed down, sympathize with him, present him to the other brethren, and converse freely with him yourself, thereby causing him to forget his woes for a short time at least. In short, meet them all and pass a few words, even though it be only the compliments of the day.

"But then, we don't have the time," says one. "What if some of them are strangers to us?" says another; and "We don't believe in that kind of foolishness," says a third.

"Of course, you can find excuses if you wish, but there is none of them but what can be overcome. Make it a point to get to lodge a little ahead of the opening, and spend a few moments with those who are also a little ahead, then remain a few minutes after the lodge closes to complete your rounds with the brethren. Especially should this be the case with the master and other officers. There is no trouble about finding the time if you want it. Try it, and see.

"Strangers to you," did you say? You did not mean that. There can be no strangers in a Masonic lodge unless you will it that way. That is the one place where "all are on a level, and though you never have seen the face before or heard the name of the "Stranger to you," you can go to him with all confidence, introduce yourself, shake his hand, and make him feel at home. He may be worth his millions and you not a cent, or vice versa, and yet every Mason knows that he is the equal of any brother within the confines of the lodge room. Try this, also.

"You don't believe in such foolishness," eh? Ah! there's the rub. You mistake brotherly love and courtesy for "foolishness"; you violate the tenets of your profession because you think them "foolishness"; you nurse your wrath and petty spite under the guise of "foolishness"; you conceal your vanity, and keep up your exclusive ideas wrapped in the cloak of "foolishness." And thus might we continue, as the word "foolishness" covers a multitude of shortcomings. But there is no "foolishness" about it. It is simply a violation of duty, a sacrifice of lodge courtesies, and an outrage perpetrated upon your own conscience. Divest yourself of this idea, do the full measure of your duty, make yourself the embodiment of lodge courtesy, and all will be well with you and your lodge, and the brethren will come again. Try it, and be convinced." But, said another:

"It doesn't cost anything to pat a brother on the back when he enters the hall on meeting nights, and say, 'Hello, Ed, how are you tonight?'"

"It doesn't cost anything when a stranger enters the lodge room to gather around him and grasp his hand and say, 'Welcome, brother, make yourself at home.'"

"It doesn't cost anything to say a cheering word to the brother who has fallen by the wayside in sickness or distress, but it does him a world of good and makes you feel better for doing it."

"Be friendly, be brotherly, and the sunshine of fraternal love will enter your heart and make you happy."

Are we guilty of any of these discourtesies as we read over the items which he mentions? Could we not find at the lodge gathering a frater-

nal contact not usually found elsewhere if we approach the situation with any degree of appreciation and should we not necessarily be enriched by that fraternal contact in a degree, the value of which cannot be calcu-

lated in this or the coming days? Would it not be well to give it a trial, thereby discovering again and again that all important question, "Know ye not that ye are brethren?"

—What Cheer Trestleboard.

Worthy Object For Masonic Support

[We commend to the consideration of our readers the excellent editorial article below from the pen of William C. Rapp of the Masonic Chronicler, Chicago. There is food for thought in it, and an opportunity is afforded the Craft as a whole to demonstrate in striking fashion the practice of those precepts that form a part of its daily life.—A. H. M.]

Modernly there is the inclination to mistake noise for action, clamor for achievement, and a fanfare of trumpets for wisdom. The up-to-date go-getter wants to open everything with a bang and close it with a snap. The impudent and enterprising "hustler" is a bearcat for publicity. He not only wants his left hand to know what his right hand doeth, but would like every hand for miles around to be fully informed. And if the feet, too, can get the tidings, he is so much better pleased. About the head he does not seem to care so much. He likes to hear the welkin ring if his own deeds are the cause of the reverberation. So a large portion of the population has come to accord rather too much esteem to blatant claims of achievement and the spotlighting of things of decidedly insignificant worth. They have an amused contempt for laborious effort and conscientious endeavor, have little respect for modest merit and inconspicuous devotion to duty, and really value nothing unless they can see motion and immediate results, and hear the sounds of triumphant struggle.

The innumerable kernels of grain now in the ground make no sound as they do their work preparatory to bringing forth the thousands of acres of grain next summer for the feeding of the world's peoples. The sap is inaudible as it rises through the tissues of the trees to clothe the forests in living green. The coral insects that lay the broad foundations and

build up reefs and even islands in the ocean waters toil silently and die unknown, leaving only their work behind them. The broad rivers that bear the commerce of nations flow without noise down to the sea. The tide of time which carries us all toward eternity is soundless. In fact, the inevitable and important movements that affect the world and the lives of men are silent and overcome all obstacles.

The original intent of Masonry was to exert a persistent, persuasive and beneficial influence upon the lives of its adherents by a quiet, evolutionary education in the good things of mind and heart. It was aimed at the uplift of the race by exerting its influence upon the units composing that race, working upon the hypothesis that a world full of righteous men can be nothing else than a righteous world. It contemplated no immediate and decisive results, and expected none, basing its faith upon a gradual and constant improvement that in the course of time would accomplish its desired results beyond the possibility of retrogression or defeat.

As in every organization composed of a large number of men of independent opinion, there are those in Masonry who contend that the institution is in danger of becoming unattractive and inert because it does not carry banners and declare itself in favor of this or that contemporary movement or crusade. They become impatient of its age-old restrictions, declaring it but a big, partially organized, unwieldy association of moral teachers, advice givers, ritual repeaters, eaters and smokers. And they ask that it declare itself and take a part in solving present day problems.

All of us occasionally become impatient of the never-ending struggle to effect individual betterment, and

cry out that the fraternity "do something"; that, as some say, it justify its existence by exerting its strength and carrying to triumph some project dear to the heart and inspiring to the imagination, which the profane world may see and learn of the value and utility of Masonry. We long for results — visible consummations of things laudable and long-desired. The human desire for justification, for accomplishment and even for acclaim actuates us, and we are not justly to be blamed, though such action would depart considerably from the original plan of Masonry, by which we are but links in a long chain, laborers putting forth our humble efforts to forward a project which is the work not of years but of centuries, and which when completed in the dim reaches of the future will mean the ushering in of an earthly millennium.

There are, however, some projects in which the Masonic sense of right should counsel co-operation and participation, projects upon which there should be no decided differences of opinion and to espouse which ought not to imperil harmony to any perceptible degree. It would be dangerous for our fraternity to assert itself in favor of any movement or reform on which there is considerable divergence of honest opinion among brethren. It would be highly injudicious to allow the zeal, even of a majority of the membership, to take a decisive stand upon any disputed question which would raise opposing factions and thus retard the object of the institution—the production of better men by harmonious association and quiet discussion.

Among the few non-controversial matters which the Masons of the United States might take up and push to a successful issue, and to which there should be but negligible opposition is the amelioration of the tuberculosis relief situation in the southwestern states. Arizona, New Mexico and Texas are, by reason of their climate, most favorable for the arrest and cure of this much feared disease. There go thousands of Masons afflicted with this malady, the larger proportion of whom are not and cannot be self-supporting. They sooner or later become burdens upon the comparatively weak lodges of that region. There could be no finer object for Masonic liberality than

the relief of this distressing situation. There is very little criticism that can be made of the way in which the Masons of the several states take care of needy, distressed brethren within their own boundaries. In this important matter, however, they have been decidedly remiss. With narrow selfishness it has been urged that Masonic charity cannot be extended to such a distance and that the southwestern states must work out the problem for themselves without calling upon the rest of the country for assistance. To everyone who gives the subject any thought, it is apparent that this contention is untenable and absurd. It would be as sensible to insist that the village of La Grange assume the entire maintenance of the Illinois Masonic Orphans' Home, or the city of Sullivan bear all the expenses of the State Home for Aged Masons, because these institutions are located in the places mentioned. Very few of the inmates of these places come from La Grange or Sullivan. They are from all parts of the state. Analogously, it is usually not the natives or longtime residents of Arizona, New Mexico or Texas who are there for the relief of tuberculosis. These pitiable dependents — burdens

through no fault of their own—are from all parts of the country. Each state furnishes its quota, and there is an especially large representation from Illinois. It is cowardly and selfish for the Masons of the country to stand upon an outworn precedent and insist upon limiting their charity to their own borders, ignoring the palpable fact that it is their own members in the southwestern states who are in need of assistance.

Here is a fine opportunity for those Masons who are so vociferous in their demands that the fraternity "do something definite" to put their preaching into practice. If it is laudable for the Mystic Shrine to sponsor and support the hospitals for crippled children, it would be equally admirable for lodge Masonry as a national unit to assume the responsibility of this very necessary tuberculosis relief, and there is the additional urge of our acknowledged obligation to extend aid to the distressed—especially our own—when ever found. The great need is commended to the consideration of those who are perpetually crying out that the institution should have some concrete and visible object upon which to expend its great energies and bestow its charity.

The Candidate

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Freemasonry first asks questions of the candidate for initiation, and then about him.

A lodge must be satisfied as to five important matters; a petitioner's motive for applying for the degrees; his physical being, his mental equipment, his moral character and his political status, using the word in its non-partisan sense.

It is highly important that Freemasons understand that a man's motives for petitioning a lodge are proper, otherwise we cannot guard our West Gate from invasion by those who will not, because they cannot, become good master Masons.

A man must ask for Light "of his own free will and accord." Not only must he so declare in his petition, but nine times during his initiation must he repeat the statement. Here grow the roots of that unwritten but universally understood prohibition

—no Mason must ask his friend to join the order.

It is easy to persuade a friend to "join something." We enjoy our country club—we will enjoy it more if our friend is a member. We put an application before him and persuade him to sign it; quite right and proper. We belong, perhaps, to a debating club or an amateur theatrical society, or a board of trade or a luncheon club. Enjoying these activities, we desire our friend also to have those pleasures, so we ask him to become one of our circle.

Entirely proper procedure in such organizations, it is a wholly improper course in Masonry. Unless a man petitions the Fraternity impelled by something within himself, he must state an untruth nine times in his initiation. Unless he is first prepared "in his heart" and not in his mind, he can never grasp the

simple but sublime essentials of brotherhood. To ask our friend to petition our lodge, then, is to do him not a favor but an injury.

In most jurisdictions a petitioner is required seriously to declare upon his honor, not only that he comes of his own free will and accord, but uninfluenced by any hope of financial gain. There are men who want to become Freemasons because they believe that the wider acquaintance and the friends made in the lodge will be "good for business." So do men join the church or a Bible class because they believe they can sell their goods to their fellow members! But the man who desires to become a member of a church that he may sell it a new carpet will hardly be an asset to the House of God; he who would become a Freemason in order to get the trade of his fellow lodge members will hardly be in a frame of mind either sincerely to promise brotherhood or faithfully to live up to its obligations. Hence Freemasonry's need to obtain the most solemn declaration possible of the secret intentions, the real motives, the hidden desires of those who would join our mystic circle.

The "Doctrine of the Perfect Youth" is perennially a matter for discussion in grand lodges. The origin of the requirement that a man be perfect in all his limbs and parts goes back to the days before the written history of the Craft. Mackey states that the first written law on the subject is found in the fifth article of the Old York or Gothic Constitutions adopted at York in A. D. 926:

"A candidate must be without blemish and have the full and proper use of his limbs; for a maimed man can do the Craft no good."

This requirement has been repeated and again repeated at various times in many different forms; in "The Ancient Charges at Making" (1686) and in the "Constitutions of 1722-23" which put in print the customs and enactments of the Mother Grand Lodge in 1717.

The same Masonic authority makes the 18th landmark read:

Certain qualifications of a candidate for initiation are derived from a Landmark of the Order. These qualifications are that he shall be a man — shall be unutilated — free born and of mature age. That is to say, a woman, a cripple or a slave or

one born in slavery, is disqualified for initiation into the rites of Masonry.

Just how strictly this law should be interpreted is a moot question, and different jurisdictions rule in different ways upon it. In no jurisdiction, for instance, is a man considered to be ineligible because he wears glasses or has a gold tooth! In most jurisdictions he must be "perfect" with two arms, two legs, two hands and two feet. In some jurisdictions, if he can conform to the requirements of the degrees, he may lack one or two fingers not vital to the tokens; in others he may not.

The foundation of the doctrine was an operative requirement; obviously a maimed man could not do as "good work, true work, square work" as the able-bodied. The requirement has been carried over into speculative Masonry. Its greatest importance to-day is less in the need for physical strength and mobility than in the undoubted fact that if we materially alter this ancient landmark, these old "usages and customs", then we can alter others, admit women, elect by a majority vote, dispense with the tiler, and hold our meetings in the public square! Physical qualifications have a further importance of a practical nature; other things being equal, the maimed man and the cripple are more apt to become charges upon the lodge than the strong and whole. Finally, the weak and feeble of body cannot offer to their brethren that same assistance in danger which he able-bodied may give.

Inspired by patriotism, some jurisdictions have relaxed the severity of their physical requirements in favor of soldiers who have suffered in behalf of their country. Into the argument pro and con as to the expedience of such relaxations this bulletin cannot go. Suffice it here that the lodge to which an applicant applies should be meticulously careful to see that the candidate conforms literally to the requirements as laid down by the grand lodge.

It is hardly necessary to say that the petition of a woman cannot be entertained under any circumstances whatsoever, nor need the reasons for it be here discussed.

The mental qualifications required of a candidate are dictated more by the desires of the individual lodge than by stated law. Many jurisdic-

tions have ruled that a man who cannot read is not an eligible petitioner, for the good and sufficient reason that he who cannot read cannot search the Great Light, nor discover for himself the by-laws of his lodge, the constitution of the grand lodge, or the old charges and ancient constitutions.

The ability to read and write, however, important though it is, does not make a man educated! Nothing is said in our ritual about the need of an education prior to becoming a Mason, but by implication a man is supposed to have sufficient educational background to be able to study the seven liberal arts and sciences. "Sufficient education" is a very broad phrase and may include all sorts of men, of all sorts of education, as, indeed, it does. A man may not know the multiplication table, murder the King's English, and believe geometry is something to eat, and yet be a hard-working, true-hearted, single-minded brother to his brethren. But it will hardly be doubted that if all Freemasons were of such limited educational equipment, the order would perish from the earth from the lack of appreciation of what it is, where it came from, and whither it is going!

First the friend who presents the petition; next the committee appointed to investigate; and finally the lodge must be the judges of what constitutes a "sufficient mental equipment" to enable a man to become a good member of the lodge.

A few ritualistic lions are in the path. He who is silly, childish, in his dotage, he who is insane, he who is known to be a fool—may not legally receive the degrees. It is to be noted that "dotage" is not a matter of years but of the effect of years. A man of four score in full possession of his mental faculties is not in his dotage. Premature senility may attack a man in his fifties; he may truly be in his dotage. Similarly a "fool" does not mean, Masonically, a man without what we consider good judgment. "Jones was a fool to go into that stock"—He is foolish to try to build that house—"What a fool he is to sell his store now"—do not really express belief that the man is a "fool" in the Masonic sense, merely that in these particular cases he acts as we think a fool would act.

Masonically, a man is a "fool" who suffers from arrested mental de-

velopment. He is not mad, neither is he in his dotage, but he lacks the ordinary mental equipment, judgment, ability of the rest of humanity. Such an one, of course, is ineligible to receive the degrees, since he can neither comprehend nor live up to their teachings.

The moral qualifications a petitioner should possess are fully understood by all. The petitioner must express his belief in Deity. No atheist can be made a Mason. He must be "under the tongue of good report"—i. e., have a good reputation in his community. He must "obey the moral law." But just how much is included in this phrase is an open question.

One or two grand lodges have attempted to read into Masonry a basis of Christianity. If Masonry were Christian, it would be impossible for the Jew, the Chinese, the Mohammedan, to become Masons. As Masonry specifically states that Masons are obliged only to believe in "that religion in which all men agree (i. e., a belief in God) leaving their particular opinions to themselves," it has seemed obvious to the vast majority of grand jurisdictions that Masonry is not, and cannot be made, sectarian.

While a "moral man" may be hard to define, he is easy to recognize. Committees seldom have much trouble in ascertaining that a man "morally fit" to become a Mason is so. The contrary is not always true—moral unfitness often masquerades under the appearance of virtue—hence the need for the competent committee.

In some jurisdictions a separate ballot is taken on the candidate for the second and third degrees, to test his "moral fitness", but usually the ballot which elects a petitioner to the degree is considered to express the opinion of the membership on all his qualifications at once.

The applicant for the degrees must be (Old Charges) "of mature and discreet age." In this country that is the legal majority. In some foreign jurisdictions it varies from eighteen, for a "lewis" or son of a Mason, to twenty-five.

Our requirement of legal age is dictated not only by the fact that Masonry is for men, and a youth does not become a man until he is twenty-one, but because to be made

a Mason in the United States a man must be a citizen, and citizenship, in its real sense, is not held by minors.

Our political requirements are most explicit upon the question of being free born. Many have erroneously thought that such qualification to keep out men of the colored race, was "read into" the body of Masonry. Unquestionably "free born" means not only not born a slave, but not born of parents who have been slaves, or whose forebears were slaves. Thus "free born" does bar the man of African descent in this country from becoming a Mason.

But the provision was an integral part of Masonic law long before Africans were imported to this country—see the statute from the Old York Constitution already quoted. The custom goes even further into antiquity. In the ancient mysteries of Greece and Rome, from which Masonry derives something of its form, a similar law prevailed. No man born a slave, or made a slave, even if freed (manumitted) could be initiated.

It is practically a universal requirement that the candidate be a resident of the jurisdiction to which he applies for a period of one year prior to making application. A man who has not resided for a reasonable period in one place cannot have demonstrated to his neighbors the kind of a man that he is. A committee is handicapped in making investigation of a man who is not among friends and neighbors. Grand lodges are usually very strict about this, but grand masters occasionally, upon a

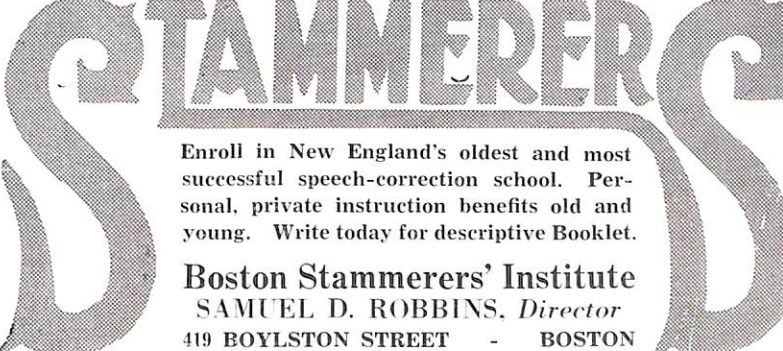
very good reason being shown, grant dispensations to shorten the statutory period. A man who has resided in a jurisdiction for ten months let us say, is ordered to Japan for three years. He desires to become a Mason before he departs. If he is satisfied that the applicant can show the committee his moral worth, a grand master may permit him to make application and receive the degrees before he departs. During the war, when all requirements seemed of less than usual importance when seen in the fierce white light of patriotism, length of residence in a jurisdiction was sometimes lost sight of.

A man considered worthy to have his petition placed before a Masonic lodge has much to recommend him. If the committee has done its work well, and if on the strength of that report the lodge elects him, he may well feel that an important seal has been placed upon his reputation and his character. That some committees do their work ill is evidenced by occasional failures of brethren to walk uprightly. That the vast majority of committees are intelligent and faithful is proved by the reputation of the Fraternity and the undoubted fact that a man known to be a master Mason is almost universally considered to be a good man and true!

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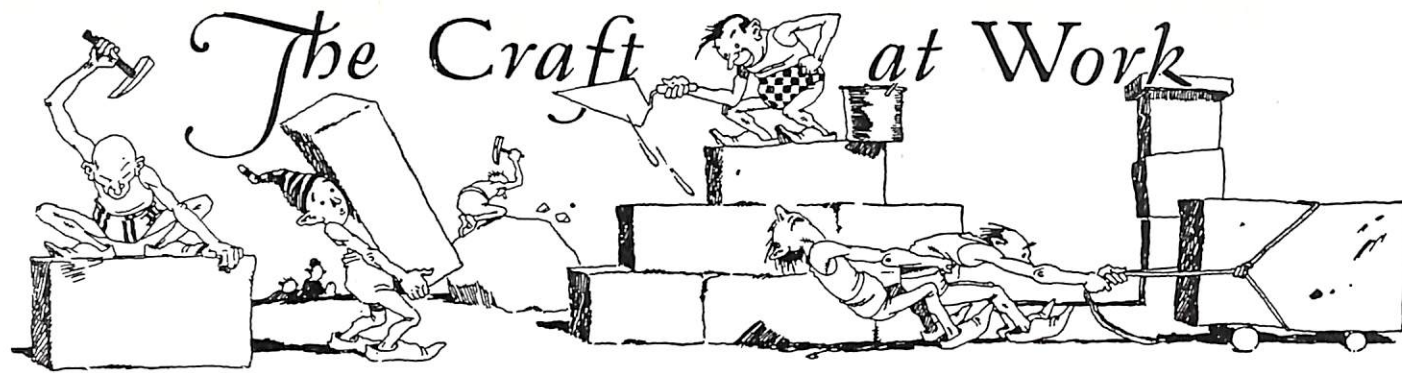
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When H. R. H. the Prince of Wales, accompanied by Prince George, visited Jerez de la Frontera in southern Spain, on the 24th of April, 1927, he was shown a butt of sherry, in the famous Gonzalez bodegas, made from grapes grown in the year of his birth—1894. The Prince sampled the wine and, approving it, consented to this vintage being dedicated to him. He placed his signature on the butt, to which his coat-of-arms was afterwards attached, and the wine was sealed in a special cellar, to be reserved for his sole use. A consignment has just been transferred to His Royal Highness's own cellar in London. Lucky Prince!

MASONRY VITAL FACTOR

Masonry was described as a force binding men together in a spirit of fraternalism and teaching them a love for mankind in general and especially for the unfortunate and oppressed, by Rev. B. W. Pullinger, Rector of Grace Episcopal Church, writing in the *Masonic News*.

"Thousands of us are better men today because of the teachings of Masonry," he stated. "There is a tie that binds us, men to men, as surely as a force holds earth to sun and sun to stars, a force which far outweighs the force of gravity, which we have come to call fraternity."

"Not only does our order seek to a fraternalism based on mutual enjoyment and fellowship—but it aims to be build up a spirit of true fraternalism—the medium wherein we may associate

ourselves with the unfortunate and the oppressed. Masonry helps me to be a friend to all. Enables me to share in all the movements in our communities wherein we live in whatever is good.

"The cardinal principles of Masonry to me are faith, hope, charity, and the greatest of these is charity. What the cardinal virtues, justice, fortitude, prudence, and temperance, were to the ancient Greeks; what liberty, equality, and fraternity were to the French Revolution; what the rights of men were to the founders of the American Republic; what the three steps in the spiritual ascent—purification, illumination, union with God—have been to mystics of all ages and countries, that, and all that, faith, hope, and love have been to all of us Masons. . . .

"It is for these reasons that Masonry means so much to me and deserves the respect of all fair-minded people. Let Masonry flourish; she belongs to the world because of her great work. Masonry to me has been a handmaiden to my religion and made my life, I trust, more helpful to my brother men and my religion more tender and myself kindlier to others."

\$3,000 TO RED CROSS

In announcing a subscription of \$3,000 to the American Red Cross on behalf of the Grand Lodge of Masons in Ohio, for the drought relief sufferers of the United States, Judge Harry G. Gram, grand master of the grand lodge, made the following statement:

The fundamental principles of Free-

masonry are brotherly love, relief and truth. My intimate knowledge with the work of the Red Cross for many years in many disasters in this country and abroad has convinced me that the Red Cross is actuated in its work for suffering humanity by the same principles. In making this subscription in the name of the grand lodge, I desire to take the opportunity of urging Masonic lodges of the state of Ohio and Masons individually to make such contributions to this appeal of the National Red Cross as they can possibly make, consistent with the demands that are being made for relief in their various localities.

PRESIDENT GETS DEGREES

At a special meeting of Scottish Rite Masons at Chapultepec Castle, Mexico City, Mex., President Ortiz Rubio be-

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came a thirty-second degree Scottish Rite Mason. After his elevation in the Scottish Rite, the President was then invested with membership in the Anzich Shrine, and also initiated into the Royal Order of Jesters.

Many prominent Mexicans are Masons, among them being former President Calles, Diaz and Gil; General Joaquin Amaro, the Minister of War; General Perez Trevino, Minister of Agriculture; Aaron Saenz, Minister of Industry and Commerce and Labor, and General Jose Maria Tapia, chief of the Presidential Headquarters Staff under former President Portes Gil, and later Governor of Lower California.

UNIQUE INSTALLATIONS

Five unique installations, in three of which father and son played the principal parts, occurred in Masonic lodges in Iowa during the month of January, according to the *Grand Lodge Bulletin*.

Ralph Stanbery was installed master of Benevolence Lodge No. 145, Mason City. He follows in the footsteps of his grandfather, W. C. Stanbery, who was the first master of the lodge, having been installed 72 years ago. This pioneer Mason was not only the first master of his lodge, but he was also the first mayor of the newly organized village which is now Mason City. He served as revenue collector under President Andrew Johnson. His son, father of the present master, also served the lodge as master.

Orange Lodge No. 123, Guthrie Center, had an unusual coincidence. S. W. Tracy was installed Master of the same lodge over which his grandfather, William Tracy, presided as first master in 1857—74 years ago. In this case there is a continuous Masonic line, as Frank P. Tracy, father of the present master, is a 50-year Mason.

L. L. Thomas, past master of Marble Lodge, 368, Carlisle, had the pleasure of installing his son, Ralph E. Thomas, as master of the lodge. This was the father installing his own son into the

first instance in Marble Lodge of a master's chair. The new master was but 25 years of age, and the first master to present a past master's jewel of the lodge—the first one being presented to the father.

Charles F. Townsend, the first master of Moingona Lodge No. 633, Des Moines, under charter, has installed all the officers of this lodge since he retired as its first master. This year he had the opportunity of installing his own son in that place of honor. He had previously conferred the three degrees upon this son.

Full Moon Lodge, Melbourne, held an unusual communication when W. B. Nason, first master of the lodge, under charter, not only inducted his son, L. J. Nason, into the master's station, but also installed another son, E. A., as senior warden, and his nephew as tyler. All of Past Master Nason's sons and all of his grandsons except one are members of Full Moon Lodge.

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ORGANIZED LODGE

OF RESEARCH

On January 21, the Grand Lodge of North Carolina issued a charter to form the North Carolina Lodge of Research No. 666, at Monroe. This is claimed to be the first chartered lodge of research in the United States, and marks the official recognition of and necessity for such a lodge by the Grand Lodge of North Carolina.

The North Carolina Lodge of Research will hold meetings on the second Tuesday of each month, at which time original papers will be read before the lodge on important subjects of Masonic research. Any master Mason in good standing in his lodge may attend these meetings.

It is the object of the Lodge of Research to form immediately a Circle of Correspondence, to which any master Mason in good standing, or any lodge, may join at the nominal cost of two dollars joining fee and annual dues of three dollars. The members of the Correspondence Circle have all the privileges of a regular member, except they cannot vote or hold office. These members will receive the transactions of the lodge, which will contain the papers read before the lodge.

MODERN MASONRY

Following reports of losses in membership by a number of grand lodges, there has arisen a good deal of speculation as to the cause. The natural conclusion would seem to be that it is a reflection of the economic depression that has existed throughout the country for some time. There are those who would have become candidates in more prosperous times. Also, there have been members who were unable to keep up with their dues. These two classes would in all probability take care of the total decrease. However, a number of writers have chosen to ignore or minimize this feature, and attribute the loss to an increasing lack of interest in the Masonic Fraternity.

This alleged lack of interest is said to exist because the fraternity has failed to keep up with the times, and that

members hesitate to attend lodge when so many other places beckon with promises of entertainment and excitement. The loss of membership offers those who take this stand an opportunity to endeavor to put across the idea of what they term "pepping up" and "modernizing" the Masonic lodges.

Perhaps there are a number of Masons that hold with this view. If "pepping up" and "modernizing" mean a predominance of jazz band methods, fun, entertainment, and little or no regard for seriousness, then one fears that they are overlooking the true mission of the fraternity.

Masonry is generally conceded to have had its inception among a band of workers, men whose pleasures were derived not from the artificial but from the real. They believed and taught that by the application of certain principles, many of which the tools of their trade symbolized, men could live a more useful life—a life whose influence would not be limited to the short space of an individual's existence, but would through the memory of good deeds, of

contributions to human welfare, continue on through the centuries.

Masonry, to-day, is a composition of those truths which have existed from time immemorial and those that have been gathered through the ages, preserved and handed down from gener-

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ation to generation. It offers, to those who seek, a wonderful field of research and, as a reward, a life of happiness through the discovery and application of its truths.

The fraternity was conceived by workers and is primarily for those who are willing, through study, to gain a truer conception of principles that will light the way in a path that leads towards a more useful and beneficial existence. The Craft never claimed to offer entertainment in the common meaning of the word; and those who live only for to-day, who are solely interested in the pursuit of momentary, artificial pleasure, have no place within its folds.

It is possible to bring about a drastic change in the quality of Masonic membership; to ignore and forget within its lodges the principles and teachings that have given the fraternity life and growth through the ages, but if such a change is brought about, Masonry will cease to live.

H.

SOLICITATION?

Editor MASONIC CRAFTSMAN:

In the matter of what might be termed "Unwritten Masonic Law" two of such particularly come to mind at the present moment, and may possibly be worthy of consideration at this time:

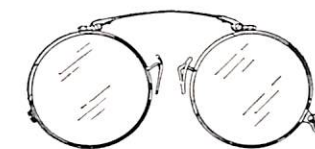
1. The matter of soliciting a man to become a member of the Blue Lodge, and;

2. The matter of soliciting a member of a Blue Lodge to affiliate with the so-called "Higher Bodies" and including also such organizations as the Shrine, Grotto, Constantine of Alabama and such like, and also the Eastern Star and its affiliated bodies.

* * * *

It has, to the best of my knowledge and belief, been an unwritten Masonic

law, that no one should ever become a member of the Masonic fraternity except he make application of his own free will, and unsolicited by a member of the fraternity, but that after he once becomes a member of some Blue lodge, he is, by virtue of that fact, the prey and object of solicitor after solicitor for every branch of the fraternity of the "higher" type, so-called, regardless of whether or not he can afford the amount that is necessary for the original fees alone, to say nothing as to his ability to meet his obligations as to annual dues thereafter. This is something he is not allowed to think of and consider, but is led to almost believe that the one sponsoring his application to such organization would in



HAROLD S. STONE
Oph. D.

OPTOMETRIST

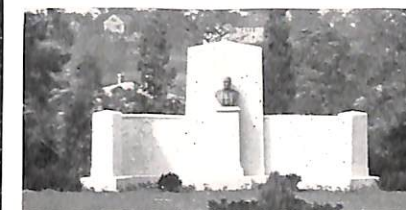
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case of an emergency be willing to meet such obligations out of his own pocket, if only he would be good enough to "sign on the dotted line," which he does in most cases of high pressure "salesmanship," and there is a lot of this put forward outside of the automobile business.

It is a question whether the old-time ideas regarding solicitation for the two classes should not at the present time be reversed, and so make it possible for the Craft to interest good men to join, that is, those whom we believe in our hearts to be good men, rather than forward outside of the automobile business wait for them to at least find out that we cannot invite them to join us, as is the custom with many organizations as important to the welfare of the community as Freemasonry is supposed and expected to be. Where would a whole lot of our public and semi-public organizations be if they made no solicitations to boost their membership?

There appears to be no good and sufficient reason why it would not be possible, and as safe, to accept a solicited member into the Masonic fraternity with the recommendation of a member, and the further safeguard of a committee, as it is at present time and under present regulations. And along this line it is a very grave question, whether at this very moment, this very method of solicitation is not in use by many Blue lodges and its members.

And after one has finally become a member of a Blue lodge in regular standing, is it out of the question to presume that it should be up to himself as to whether he is interested enough and financially able to "seek further light", and for a desire to ascertain on his own account and by his own volition, that which he is now assured beforehand will be of such an everlasting benefit to him.

I am aware that the expense of maintaining the average Masonic body is made the stepping stone for what may almost be termed "paid solicitors" by many of our upper bodies, and from the time a man signs the by-laws of a Blue lodge, and sometimes even prev-

ious to that happy moment, he is the target of someone to "come along into" the chapter, or start in on the Scottish Rite, whether he can afford it or not, whether he has had time to actually find out whether he is satisfied at being made a Mason, and all this to satisfy the everlasting fact, continually paraded before most of us, that we must have this or that number of candidates if we are to survive the coming year. Most every newly installed head of any upper body will give out that song and dance ritual regarding the securing of applications the night of his installation and follow it up with colored circulars at odd times during his term of office.

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Now, if we do not solicit for the advanced degrees, will it not actually create more interest and longing for the Blue lodge member to wonder why it is, and in time ask for an application of his own free will because he has in the meantime learned something of Freemasonry, while the one who does not really warm up to it, and there are a lot of that kind, is not saddled on the Chapter or Council or whatever it may be, and in time become a burden both to himself and the fraternity as far as an beneficial member and the best asset is actual Masonic asset is concerned. The one who goes higher in Masonry because he learned to like the Blue lodge as a starter, and really wishes to learn.

(Signed) A PAST MASTER.

ANCIENT BIBLE GIFT

Otto Stoltz, junior warden of Monteta Lodge No. 405, Los Angeles, Cal., has presented to the Masonic Library of Southern California at Los Angeles an old Luther Bible which was printed by the order of the theological faculty of the University of Heidelberg in 1666. The Bible has been the property of the Stoltz family for nearly two centuries and is well preserved. The library board has had this valuable book re-covered and it is now in excellent condition.

ANCIENT MASONIC CERTIFICATE

There was recently discovered at Streetsville, Canada, a Masonic certificate issued by the United Grand Lodge of England in 1815, to Alfred Rich, at that time a Master Wheeler in the Citadel at Quebec. The certificate which bears the caption: "United Grand Lodge, Ancient and Accepted Masons, H. R. H. Duke of Sussex, Grand Master," states that Alfred Rich received the third degree in Lodge No. 17, Quebec, in 1815, and the seal of the grand lodge was attached in 1817, the presumption being that the certificate was sent to England for signature.

Mr. Rich later moved to this city and when River Park Masonic Lodge was organized here attended the first meeting, wearing his Masonic apron, which bears the date 1816, and is today treasured by his granddaughter.

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A TRUTH ENUNCIATED

In a recent address a Deputy Grand Master observed that "this ceremony is significant because it expresses in a concrete way the ideal of fraternalism within the group. The spirit of fraternalism should not cease with the end of earthly existence. Fraternalism is really a spiritual relationship. It is what Robert Burns called a mystic tie and should continue independent of physical mortality. Freemasonry ought to be more than a ritualistic procedure. It should be a mental attitude. It is an expression of the heart. Therefore, the provision which has been made here for the care of the human remains is an outward expression of that inward sentiment. Here the sailor will come from the sea, and the hunter from the hill; here those who have been called away in the Springtime of youth, those who have heard the summons in the strength of their mature years, and those others who have reached the evening of life and have longed for the happy hills of rest, will all find an abiding place together."

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FAMILIAR STUFF

Bob Tamplin: What, excavating this street again?

Foreman: Sure, the contractor is a surgeon, and it seems that three steam shovels are missing.

WAY BACK

A backwoods mountaineer one day found a mirror which a tourist had lost. "Well, if it ain't my old dad," he said, as he looked in the mirror. "I never knowed he had his pitcher took."

He took the mirror home and stole into the attic to hide it. But his actions didn't escape his suspicious wife. That night while he slept she slipped up to the attic and found the mirror. "Hum-um," she said, looking into it, "so that's the old hag he's been chasin'."

ALL PALS TOGETHER

When he stood up he was spellbound. The big and jubilant audience dazed him, and as he stammered and stuttered in an attempt to get started, one of the members of the audience hollered: "Tell 'em all you know, Bill. It won't take long."

That was just enough to rattle Bill. "I'll tell 'em all we both know," he shot back. "It won't take any longer."

RIGHT!

Mother (teaching son arithmetic): "Now take the Spinks family. There is mother, daddy and the baby. How many does that make?"

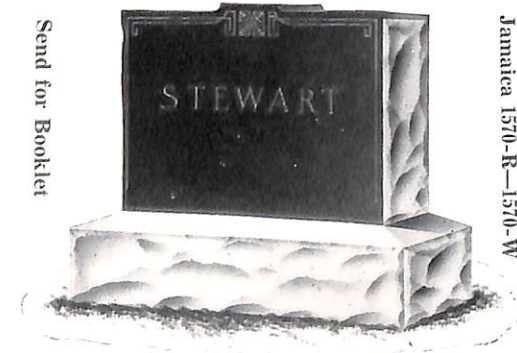
Son: "Two and one to carry."

OZONE

Late at night a gentleman rolled out of the door of an exclusive night club and blinked up at the stars. "Gracious!" he exclaimed to the fancily dressed doorman, "What is that strange odor around here?"

"That sir," said the doorman, "is fresh air."

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FINALLY FELT SAFE

"Gus," said Bill, as he caught up with him on the way back to camp, "are all the rest of the boys out of the woods yet?"

"Yes," said Gus.

"A "All six of them?"

"And they're all safe?"

"Yep," answered Gus. "They're all safe."

"Then," said Bill, his chest swelling, "I've shot a deer."

A BELIEVER

She—"Do you believe in church lotteries?"

He—"Well, I was married in church."

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A Russian was being led to execution by a squad of Bolshevik soldiers one rainy morning.

"What brutes you Bolsheviks are," grumbled the doomed one, "to march me through a rain like this."

"How about us?" retorted one of the squad. "We have to march back."

MOTHER'S HELP

Father—"Now I want to put a little scientific question to you, my son. When the kettle boils, what does the steam come out of the spout for?"

Son—"So that mother can open your letters before you get them!"

REVERSIBLE

A grumpy old cynic in church said when the collection was passe d'to him: "Not a cent; I don't believe in missions."

"Then," said the usher, "won't you take something out? It's intended for the heathen."

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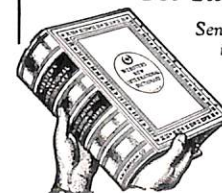
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CARE TO DANCE?

He: "Do you care for dancing?"

She: "No."

He: "Why not?"

She: "It's merely hugging set to music."

He: "Well, what is there about it that you don't like?"

She: "The music."

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